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Public Events to Mark Geneva's Calvin Jubilee

(Geneva) - The celebration of the 450th anniversary of the birth of Calvin will include the first "Festival of Sound and Light" to be held in Switzerland.

Commencing on Sunday, May 31, the spectacle will be repeated every fine night during the summer months of 1959 in front of the Reformation Monument, a wall set off by statues of the four reformers, Farel, Calvin, Knox, Beza and other figures of the Reformed faith in Europe.

The figures on the wall will be cast into relief by a varied play of lights and accompanied by recorded voices and music telling the story of the Reformation in retrospect. Various languages will be used so as to give tourists a sense of participation. Text for the display has been prepared by Henri Laudenbach, author of successful scripts used in the illumination of the castles in the Loire valley in France in recent years.

Other events planned by the local Geneva committee, which is working with the World Presbyterian Alliance, are a Sunday morning rally at the Reformers' Monument, to be inaugurated by fanfares and the music of 16th century Geneva psalms, and the Swiss première of a new film on the Reformation by the well-known French director, Roger Leenhardt.

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On Monday, June 1, the World Presbyterian Alliance will open the renovated Calvin Auditorium next to the Cathedral of St. Pierre. John Calvin taught the Bible in the Auditorium, which was used by the Scots reformer John Knox for the worship by English-speaking exiles in the Reformation city in the sixteenth century. The building, restored in the original style as the result of an international appeal, will again house services of worship in various languages for international communities in Geneva.

On June 2, the hundreds of visitors expected in Geneva will visit the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Bossey, where they will be addressed by Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the WCC.

Among speakers during the four-day period of intensive celebrations, May 31 - June 3, are the French novelist André Chamson, Professor Wilhelm Niesel of Germany and Pastor Marc Boegner of the French Reformed Church.

Pastor Boegner will preach at a solemn service marking the inauguration of the 400th anniversary celebrations of the founding of Calvin's academy on June 3. The academy developed into the University of Geneva. The university's commemoration takes place from June 3 to 6. The last fifteen days of May will see a series of celebrations in France to mark the 400th anniversary of the publication of Calvin's "Institutes" and of the holding of the first synod of Reformed churches in France. (See EPS No. 37, 1958).
EPS, Geneva

Italian Council Upholds Protestant Right to Build

(Rome) - The Council of State, Italy's highest administrative authority, has ruled that a Protestant congregation in the village of San Angelo has a "fully recognized" right to build a church.

The council said that attempts by village officials to stop construction of a Baptist church were "illegitimate".

The village officials had said that the Rev. Graziano Cannito, pastor of the 278-member church, did not show them his credentials as an evangelical minister, as required by law. After the building was started last year, the mayor of nearby Veroli, who administers San Angelo, ordered the pastor to tear down what had been built and threatened to send a policeman if his orders were not carried out. Mr. Cannito appealed against the action, saying that the order to raze the structure was based on religious discrimination.

The council's decision was called "fair" by Dr. Manfredi Ronchi, president of the Federal Council of Italian Evangelical Churches.
EPS, Geneva

Africa Bureau Protests Against Arrests in Southern Rhodesia

(London) - The Africa Bureau, a nonpartisan, interdenominational body in the United Kingdom, has deplored the action of the Southern Rhodesian government in arresting Mr. Guy Clutton-Brock, until recently agricultural adviser to St. Faith's Mission Farm in Rusape, and Mr. John Mutasa, the farm's manager.

The statement, issued on March 3, says that the government's action in declaring an emergency and arresting hundreds of members of the African National Congress, without charge, is "a panic measure which must have grave consequences".

"Such dictatorial action," the statement continued, "is unprecedented, and it only confirms the allegation, made frequently by Africans in Central Africa, that government policy there is one of unashamed white domination. Mr. Clutton-Brock and Mr. Mutasa, as agriculturalist and farm manager at St. Faith's, were the two people responsible for establishing the most successful inter-racial agricultural project in the Federation."

St. Faith's farm is on 12,000 acres of land owned by the Anglican diocese. The staff includes three Europeans and 50 to 60 Africans.

A protest meeting was held in London on March 9, calling for action against "the injustice of such detentions and deportations without trial". Speakers included Father Trevor Huddleston, well-known Anglican priest of the Community of the Resurrection, who formerly worked in Johannesburg. EPS, Geneva

United Church Board Urges Disarmament for Canada

(Toronto) - Canada has been urged to set a "moral example" to the world by disarming immediately and to use the money saved to build a United Nations police force, develop peaceful uses of atomic energy, aid underdeveloped countries and improve educational and social programmes at home.

The plea was in a resolution adopted by the United Church of Canada's Board of Evangelism and Social Service at its annual meeting in Toronto this month.

The statement said that there is no defence in the nuclear age except attack and such attack would be "a denial of the spirit and ethics of the Christian faith". It stressed the fact that "risk investment for unpredictable military equipment" was an economic hazard to the public. "All mankind is now engulfed by a climate of fatalism and despair which calls for bold Christian action," it said.

Speaking during the meeting, Dean Liston Pope of Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Conn., said that churches of North America "have lost much of their social concern".

Statements issued by ecumenical assemblies from Edinburgh in 1910 to Evanston in 1954, he said, were imbued with a "notable spirit of social responsibility. But meanwhile, the churches and ministers and theological students in American have lost much of their social concern, though no generalization can apply to them all".

He said that churches in Europe, Asia and Africa, on the other hand, are talking and acting in terms reminiscent of the old Social Gospel movement in the United States. EPS, Geneva

First Filipino Bishop of Episcopal Church Consecrated

(Manila) - The first Filipino suffragan bishop of the Philippine Episcopal Church was consecrated in Manila's St. Luke's Pro-Cathedral on February 24. He is the Rev. Benito C. Cabanban, 48.

Taking part in the ceremony were Bishop Lyman C. Ogilby, bishop of the Philippine Episcopal Church; the bishop of Honolulu, Harry S. Kennedy; and the bishop of Rangoon, Victor G. Shearburn. Also participating was the Supreme Bishop of the Philippine Independent Church, the Most Rev. Isabelo de los Reyes Jr.

The new suffragan bishop, in addition to his normal duties, will assist

Bishop Ogilby in the care of missions, three hospitals, nine dispensaries and twenty-two schools administered by the church.

The Philippine church has 51,000 members, 36 ordained Filipino priests, three Chinese and 17 American priests.

EPS, Geneva

Station DYSR in Philippines to Expand

(Manila) - Plans for the expansion of the radio ministry of Station DYSR in Dumaguete City, Philippines, to cover all of South East Asia, have been approved by RAVEMCCO. DYSR is one of two non-commercial Christian broadcasting stations in Asia sponsored by RAVEMCCO, the Radio Audiovisual Educational Mass Communication Committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. The other is in Seoul, Korea.

According to the expansion plans, the South East Asia radio project will aim to bring together students from Asian countries, train them in radio techniques and especially in the preparation of Christian programmes for their own countries. After their training in the DYSR studios, the students would return to their homes and prepare broadcasts, on tapes, suitable for local stations. The tapes will be returned to DYSR and broadcast on powerful wave lengths to the countries where they originated.

Dr. Henry Mack, DYSR administrative director, has been named to work half time on the expanded project. He will tour South East Asia this spring to select trainees and assess radio needs. Classes for the new programme are expected to start in the spring of 1960.

The station has applied for added wave lengths in the Philippines and for short wave in South East Asia.

EPS, Geneva

Austria's Protestants Seek Increased State Subsidy

(Vienna) - Austria's Reformed and Lutheran churches have complained to the state that the subsidy they receive in carrying out their work is not in proportion to the number of Protestants in the country.

The churches' synods met in early March and sent a resolution to the government pointing out that existing proposals for state grants allocate money between Catholics and Protestants in the proportion of twenty to one. The churches say that a 1951 census shows the proportion to be at least fifteen to one.

Lutherans and Protestants also decided, for the first time, to introduce a single hymn book for use by both confessions. The decision was hailed as a step in the direction of closer unity because the hymn book will be widely used for common prayer and religious instruction.

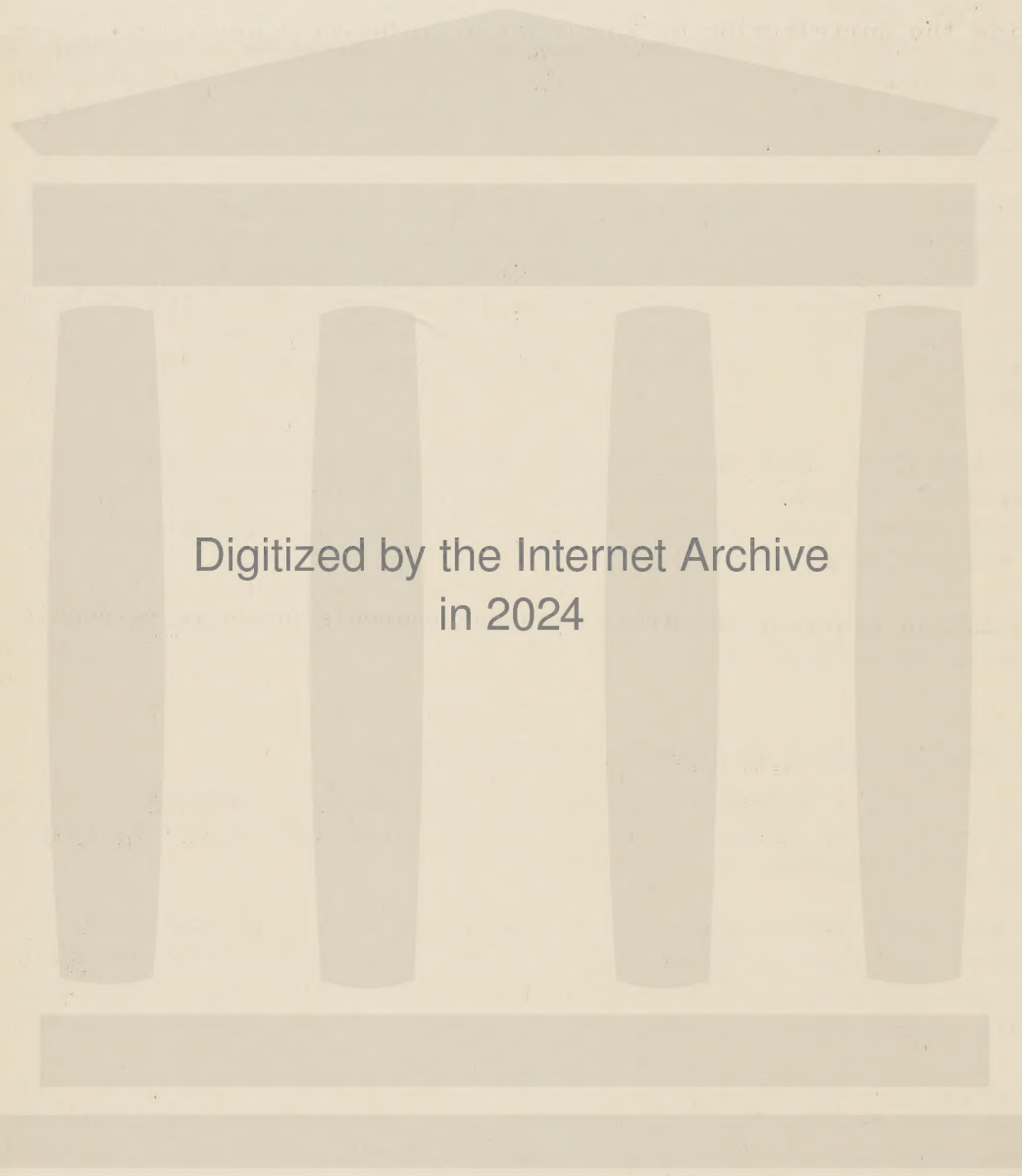
EPS, Geneva

Secular Ceremony Replaces Baptisms in Czechoslovakia

(Prague) - A secular ceremony, similar to the one introduced in East Germany as a substitute for Christian baptism (see EPS No. 7), is now being held in Czechoslovakia.

At the "substitute baptism" in Czechoslovakia, the mayor gives a short address, a Russian cradle song is played and members of the Communist Youth Organization, wearing their uniforms, recite a poem. At the end of the ceremony, the parents are given a wreath of flowers.

EPS, Geneva



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Supreme Court Upholds YMCA Stand in Manila

(Manila) - The strike of 85 employees against the Manila YMCA has been called illegal by the Philippine Supreme Court (see EPS No. 8). The strike was called because of unmet demands for salary increases. The employees contended that the YMCA was bound by labour legislation.

The decision, handed down on February 24, said that the YMCA is "a youth serving association" and is not governed by the Industrial Peace Act and therefore is outside the jurisdiction of the Court of Industrial Relations. The court restrained the employees from "holding the illegal strike, maintaining the unlawful picket lines and perpetrating the acts and omissions complained of" by the YMCA. The Y officials had said that the picketers were disorderly and prevented YMCA members from using the organization's facilities.

The YMCA Employees Association has until April 11 to file an answer to the Supreme Court decision.

While some services have been curtailed, office secretaries have taken over the job of operating and cleaning the building. Manila police have been guarding the buildings and premises of the YMCA, since the strike began on January 30, to prevent vandalism.

EPS, Geneva

Norway's Schools to Remain Confessional

(Oslo) - Protests from teachers, parents and clergy in Norway have resulted in defeating a Government proposal to change the confessional character of the state schools and to restrict the state Lutheran church's share in responsibility for education.

The Government's bill, which never came to the floor of the Parliament, would have cancelled present regulations, including the one that religious instructors in schools must belong to the state church. Under the present rules, teachers are considered to have an obligation "to educate their pupils as Christians"; the schools are supervised by the school director and the bishop; and teachers must be members of the state church.

EPS, Geneva

In Brief

The General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA has sent a message of prayer and appreciation to US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles for his contributions to the work of the churches in international affairs.

* *

Dr. Oscar Cullman of Basel, Switzerland, has appealed in the USA for reciprocal offerings for the needy as a step towards unity between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The suggestion, originally made in Europe, was repeated at Union Theological Seminary, New York, where Dr. Cullman is a visiting professor.

* *

The Rev. David L. Edwards has been appointed editor and managing director of the Student Christian Movement Press in London. He has been a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, since 1952 and a Curate of St. Martin's in the Fields in London.

* *

Mrs. Theodore O. Wedel, immediate past-president of United Church Women, has been elected chairman of the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. At the commission's annual meeting in New York last month, the out-going chairman, Rome Betts, deplored the tendency of some denominations to follow a "lone wolf" course in broadcasting and said that a fund of between five and ten million dollars, built up over 15 to 20 years by individuals and foundations, would ensure quality programmes and encourage experimentation. Twenty-three Protestant and Orthodox communions participate in the commission.

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The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in Greece has designated 1959 as "The Year of Greek Orthodoxy". Purpose of the observance is to discuss the attitude of the Greek Church toward proselytism. Lectures and discussions by prominent Greek theologians will be featured.

* *

Billy Graham's Australian Crusade is setting new records. After two weeks, the American evangelist has spoken to 393,000 persons and reported 13,738 "decisions for Christ", a Crusade spokesman said.

* *

Mr. Ernest A. Andrews Jr. has been named secretary of Men's Work for the Presbyterian Church, US. For the past year Mr. Andrews served as associate secretary in the Department on the Laity of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. He was on loan from the Board of Christian Education of his church.

* *

The synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church, which last summer made it possible for women to enter the ordained ministry, has refused a request from the Gereformeerde Bond, a strongly Calvinistic branch of the church, to revoke its decision. In replying, the synod said that "in the continued discussion ... your objections will be brought forward It need hardly be said that the spirit of sectarianism and schism ... must be avoided among us."

* *

At a meeting this month in Berlin, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) decided not to issue an official comment on the proposed church council, called by Pope John XXIII. The VELKD leaders said that if the Vatican desires contact with other Christian churches they felt it should be done through the World Council of Churches. The meeting, chaired by Bishop Hanns Lilje, also dealt with preparations for this year's Lutheran General Synod, scheduled for October 5 to 9 in Lübeck, Germany. EPS, Geneva

CORRECTION: A recent appeal to German citizens to combat anti-semitism (see EPS No. 7) was issued by the Coordinating Council of the Council of Christians and Jews.

Document

National Council in US Upholds Duty of Churches
to Speak on Controversial Issues

(The General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA issued the following appeal after its meeting in Hartford, Connecticut, in late February. The statement followed widespread criticism of a message issued by a world order study conference last autumn, held under the council's sponsorship, which included a proposal to recognize Communist China. See EPS Nos. 45, 1958 and 9, 1959)

This letter, addressed in Christian fellowship to the whole community of the Church, heralds a moment significant for the life and work of the National Council of Churches and of its member churches. Every organization must, on occasion, confront issues which test its purposes and try its values. Such an issue has now arisen growing out of the Fifth World Order Study Conference and its message entitled "Christian Responsibility on a Changing Planet".

It arises in the form of a series of challenges to a basic tenet of the National Council of Churches, stated most recently by the General Board at its meeting of December 3 - 4, 1958. This concerns the right and duty of the Christian churches and their councils "to study and comment upon issues, no matter how controversial, in the realm of politics, economics and social affairs, in view of their common faith in Jesus Christ as both Lord and Saviour." In exercising this right and fulfilling this duty, the National Council of Churches has repeatedly been charged by enemies and criticized by worried friends as being soft towards communism.

Reiterating our loyalty to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our opposition to atheistic communism, we declare that the basic challenge to the council and to the churches does not arise solely from specific viewpoints or conclusions expressed by them.

The issue is the right of the citizen of whatever race or creed, and of any peaceable organizations he chooses to form or join, to discuss freely and to express judgments, without exposure to attacks upon motive or integrity for daring to exercise the right to do so. Such a right is especially vital to the Church, which owes a duty to lead and to inform, so that its members may be aided in reaching morally valid judgments in the light of their common faith.

This freedom we cherish does not belong to the Church alone. Like all fundamental rights, it is linked with other freedoms, including those of the press, assemblage, and worship. We defend these rights with equal vigour.

Our nation faces dilemmas, at home and abroad, which are difficult enough to resolve, even with the benefit of full and forthright public debate. There is little reason to hope these dilemmas will diminish or disappear in the foreseeable future, or that they will make lesser claims upon our wisdom and fortitude. Accordingly, the right of free discussion becomes ever more essential, not as a private privilege, but as a public necessity, and attacks upon it must be vigilantly resisted.

The National Council of Churches reminds the churches that its pronouncements, policy statements, and findings of study conferences are designed to help our members in the free process of finding the truth and acting upon it. They are not to be interpreted as beyond thoughtful criticism.

The General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA addresses this appeal to all of its constituent churches, related councils and organizations:

1. UPHOLD the right and duty of the churches and their councils to study and comment upon issues of human concern, however controversial.
2. ENCOURAGE from within and without the churches and their councils full and open criticism of the positions taken by them.
3. RESIST all efforts to discourage full freedom of discussion and, in discussion, REJECT attempts to suppress such freedom.
4. INVITE full candour on the part of government officials and other leaders of opinion in the public exposition of problems and dilemmas affecting our nation and its citizens.

Your response to this appeal is invited and will be welcomed by the National Council of Churches.

EPS, Geneva

